WAR FOR FREEDOM

African American Experiences in the Era of the Civil War

A Web-based Curriculum

Gettysburg

Written by
Peter Vermilyea, Housatonic Valley Regional H.S., Falls Village, CT
William Tally, Educational Development Center, Inc.

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I. Introduction

Gettysburg is the best-known and most visited Civil War battlefield. It has become a touchstone for millions of Americans, taking on meanings that go beyond the battlefield and Civil War history.

The town's African Americans, who likely understood the causes of the conflict better than any of the town's residents, have been largely ignored by historians. The stories of these individuals — all free on the eve of war — raise important questions about the African American experience in the Civil War:

> How did people become free?
>
> How did they protect their freedom?
>
> How did they expand their freedom?
>
> And what, in the end, did it mean to them that the greatest battle in this war for freedom took place in their backyards?

II. Overview Slideshow

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 1863.

John Hopkins, a free black man is working as the custodian at Pennsylvania College, when the town is swept by rumors that the Confederate army is moving north and capturing African Americans. Like many other blacks in the area, Hopkins chooses to leave behind his home and his belongings and go into hiding.

After the Battle of Gettysburg, Hopkins returns to find his home ransacked, his personal belongings stolen, and many of his black neighbors gone forever. Hopkins helps put together the pieces of a college and town torn apart by war.

In November, with the clean-up mostly complete, Abraham Lincoln arrived in Gettysburg to participate in the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery. Lincoln's words that day have taken on iconic status in American history and culture, and have taken on various meanings through the decades.

But how were Lincoln's words heard and interpreted by John Hopkins and by the other African American residents of Gettysburg?

In this exercise you will examine the history of Gettysburg's African American community by focusing on the lives of five of its members:

> *Basil Biggs*, a tenant farmer and veterinarian, who helped bury more than 3,000 Union soldiers …
>
> *Mag Palm*, a conductor on the Underground Railroad who became the target of slave hunters …
>
> *Abraham Brien*, whose farm stood at the center of the Union battle line, where the Confederate attack destined to be known as "Pickett's Charge," was repulsed …
>
> *Owen Robinson*, a restaurant owner and church sexton, …
>
> *Lloyd Watts*, who enlisted in the United States Colored Troops.

Here you will assume the role of a black resident of Gettysburg to reconstruct life in a free black community, revisit the fears and decisions of African American refugees as the Confederate army approaches, and explore a town and community ravaged by war. Your response to these experiences will shape the way you listen and understand the words uttered by Abraham Lincoln in his dedication of the National Cemetery in Gettysburg.

Ultimately, you will have to decide whether Lincoln's words hold any hope or promise for your character.

III. Teacher Page

Concepts

U.S. History content:

1. Develop an understanding of the nature of a free African American community in the pre-war era

2. Explore the questions of:

   How did people become free?

   How did they protect their freedom?

   How did they expand their freedom?

3. "Make the refugee experience palpable" for students

4. Engage in a discussion about different interpretations and opinions of the Gettysburg Address

Prior Knowledge for Students

1. Free blacks, especially those near the Mason-Dixon line, lived with the knowledge that they might be captured and re-enslaved by bounty hunters at any time.

2. Taking to the road to avoid capture was part of many free blacks' experience.

3. The Confederate army had a string of victories in the Eastern Theater of the Civil War up to June 1863 that led them to invade the North and force a climactic battle.

IV. Explore the Setting

The Landscape

The road networks that led the Union and Confederate armies to a collision in Gettysburg in the summer of 1863 were also vital in the establishment of the town's African American community. Eleven major roads come together in the town square, linking Gettysburg to such important locations as Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington. In the decades before the Civil War, these roads carried produce and manufactured goods from the small borough to larger markets. As the roads to Baltimore and Washington were better than those running north or west, the economy of the town and its surrounding area was linked more closely with the South than to the North. The roads that carried newly made carriages, brick, grain, or fruits to markets in Maryland and Virginia also brought fugitive slaves through the borough. Many of these runaways would seek refuge in the woods, creek beds, hills and boulder fields south of town. It is perhaps fitting that these same features of the south central Pennsylvania landscape would provide a measure of protection to Union soldiers defending against Confederate attacks during the Civil War's best known battle.

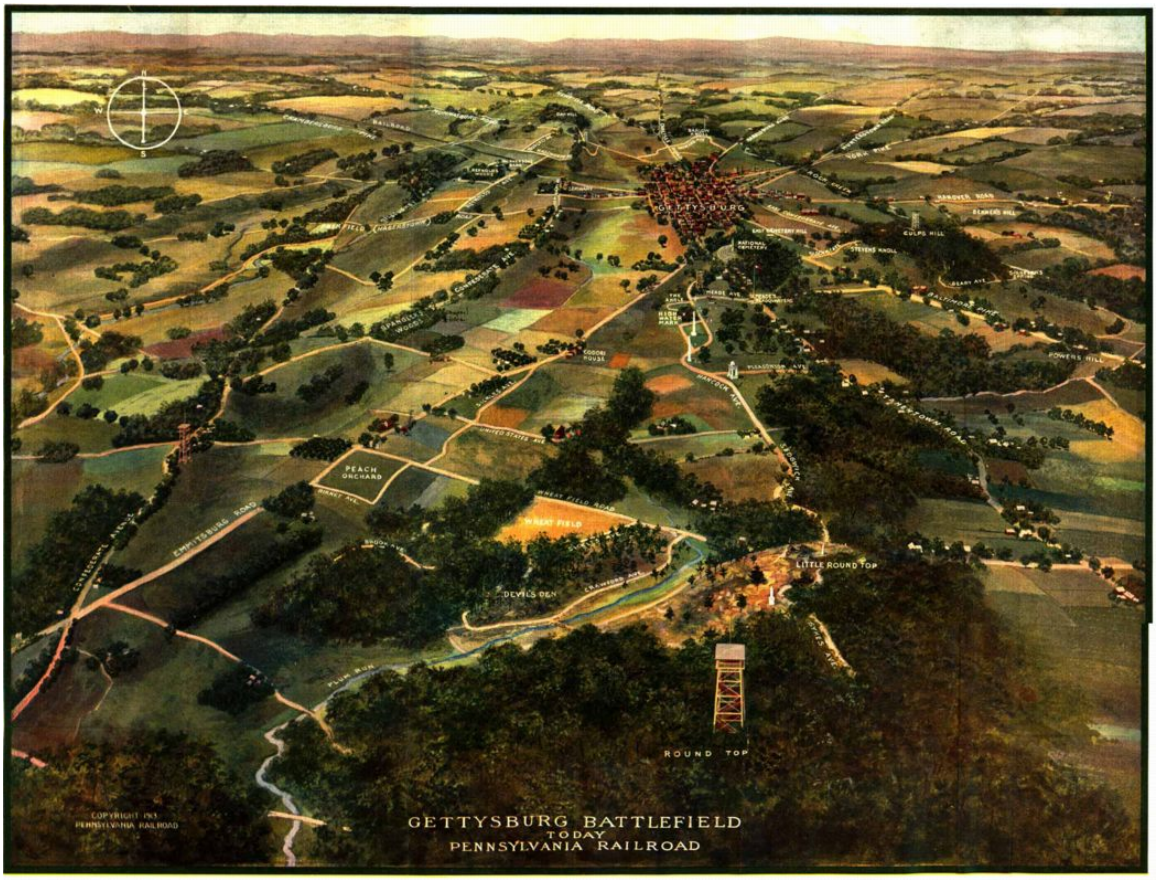
The hills and woods surrounding Gettysburg provided protection for runaway slaves seeking refuge, but there were also residents here sympathetic to the plight of runaways. These people allowed their homes and businesses to be stations on the "underground railroad" that traversed Adams County, providing both shelter and food for a brief period during the journey north.

Look at the map below. How might these three geographical features have shaped Gettysburg resident's experience in the war?

Road network crossroads

Connection to the South

Underground Railroad



http://www.gdg.org/maps/

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The African American Community

Gettysburg's African American community was established in the spring of 1776 when the Reverend Alexander Dobbin brought his two slaves to the Marsh Creek valley to construct a stone building that would serve as Dobbin's home and classical school. These slaves were the first known black inhabitants of what would become the borough of Gettysburg.

The area's proximity to the Mason-Dixon Line made it a haven for Underground Railroad activity, and many of the slaves who came to the region seeking freedom stayed because of the prospect of employment in the town's brick kilns, carriage shops, and farms. A visit from the nationally known Reverend Daniel Alexander Payne in 1837 sparked a religious revival in Gettysburg's African American community and led to the creation of St. Paul's African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church as well as the Wesleyan Church.

The Pennsylvania Free School Act of 1834 initiated the creation of a "Colored School" in town. In the years before the Civil War, religion and education would become the twin pillars upon which the Gettysburg's African American community was built.

In 1860, Gettysburg's population of 2,400 included 189 African Americans, twenty of whom owned property in the town. "Day laborer," according to the U.S. Census, was the most common occupation for men who were employed in Gettysburg's brickyards, carriage and wagon shops, on farms and in mills. The most common occupation for women was "domestic servant", working as laundresses and cleaners for white residents or taking care of their own homes. However, living in Gettysburg in 1863 was like, as historian Margaret Creighton has termed it, "living on the fault line." Slave raiders had entered the borough throughout the 1850's looking for runaway slaves. For some African Americans in Gettysburg, freedom also meant vigilance.

The town's proximity to the Mason-Dixon Line, which had brought so many of the area's black residents to Gettysburg in the first place, would put the town in the path of the armies and forever alter its African American community.

V. Learning Activities

1. Life in a free black community before the Civil War

A. Get to know Gettysburg in 1863. Read about…

- The town's African American community
- The Landscape and its impact upon the town's economy & history

[see Explore the Setting]

B. Choose a character that you will portray through the battle and after.

- Basil Biggs
- Abraham Brien
- Mag Palm
- Lloyd Watts
- Owen Robinson

[All appear in the Overview Slideshow]

C. What can you learn about your character's life from the historical record? Piece together as much as you can to answer these questions:

- Where am I from?
- How do I make a living?
- Speculate: Why might I have come to Gettysburg?

D. Discuss with your partners:

i. Gettysburg's location seven miles from the Mason-Dixon line made free blacks living there a target for slave hunters and

other dangers. Why would African Americans have settled in Gettysburg in the pre-war era?

ii. What institutions, skills, and values are evident in the black community of Gettysburg?

E. Write an autobiographical sketch of your character.

It's the eve of the battle of Gettysburg. Feel free to make inferences and speculations to make your character human. Consider the following questions as a guide:

i. Where were you born and why did you come to Gettysburg?

ii. Are you married? Do you have children?

iii. Do you enjoy your job?

iv. How are you involved in your community?

v. Do you feel secure or nervous about living in Gettysburg?

vi. What are your hopes for the future?

Here's a sample autobiography of JOHN HOPKINS, JANITOR:

> "I was born in Maryland in 1820, but moved to Pennsylvania, a land where I could live in greater freedom and get a better job. There I met my wife Julia, and we had two sons. In Pennsylvania they could be educated, and my wife and I hope that by going to school they will have opportunities that we never did. I work as the janitor at Pennsylvania College, where I keep the classrooms clean and the fires lit. I also ring the bell to call students to class. Seeing these students on a daily basis I have learned the importance of education, and I try to emphasize that fact to my sons. My wife and I saved our pennies and bought a house in town, but when the college gave me living quarters on campus, we rented out our house in town for extra income."

2. Engaged in a Great Civil War: The Battle

What will you do when your very existence is threatened?

[Teacher Note: You may wish to introduce this segment by reading the words of Salome Myers, a young white woman living in Gettysburg, who writes in her diary on June 15, 1863: "The Darkies made such a racket up and down by our house that we could not sleep." The noise she hears is the sound of her black neighbors fleeing town with all the belongings they could carry. What is making them leave so suddenly? Students will find out by reading accounts of African American experience in the time leading up to the battle.

Tell students as they read to imagine that they look out their window and see the scenes they are reading about. A friend shouts that the Rebels are coming. They have only a moment to decide if they will stay or flee.]

A. Decide whether you flee, or stay and hide.

The Confederate army is on the move and many of your black neighbors are fleeing town. Will you? There are risks if you stay, and risks if you go.

To figure out what you should do, read the following accounts about African Americans' experiences as the Confederate Army draws closer to Gettysburg.

Then, use the following Student Chart to chart the risks and benefits of staying and of fleeing Gettysburg, as you read the accounts.

	Risks	**Benefits**
Should I stay? Name of Doc:		
Should I Flee? Name of Doc:		

B. Decide where you'll go, and what you'll bring.

You have been given a map to guide your journey. Study it carefully and determine - Where you will go? And why? Be sure to provide evidence drawn from the map.

(*INCLUDE MAP HERE SHOWING TOPOGRAPHY, ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES, DEMOGRAPHY, AND ROUTES OF CONFEDERATE INVASION AND UNION PURSUIT*)

C. Write a narrative of your flight, hiding, or capture, in the form of a letter, diary entry, or reminiscence.

Consider answering the following questions in your narrative:

- What do you bring and why?
- What do you have to leave behind?
- Would you ever return to Gettysburg? Why or why not?
- If so, when would you go back?
- If you stay behind in Gettysburg, how will you hide? Where will you go? Whom do you trust and why?

3. A New Birth of Freedom: Hearing the Gettysburg Address through Different Ears

Hearing the Gettysburg Address through Different Ears

[For teachers: Students will begin this activity by updating their character's autobiographical sketch using the 1870 research folder. If your class is using this lesson as a stand-alone activity and has not written the autobiographical sketches in Learning Activity #1, you may find autobiographies here. (insert link to pre-written bios.)]

A. Use the 1863 Research Folder to update your autobiographical sketch. Focus on answering the following questions:

i. Where are you and what are you doing in November 1863?

ii. Describe the appearance of the town of Gettysburg and your home upon your return.

iii. What did the battle wreak? What have you lost? What experiences have you gained? What are your frustrations? Hopes? Fears?

B. Using your newly updated autobiography as a reference, speculate on how and when might you have heard of the Gettysburg Address.

C. Read the following sources to complete this worksheet:

i. Lincoln's Gettysburg Address

[Create mechanism for scaffolding, parsing, etc.]

ii. Contemporary attitudes of the Lincoln Administration, government policies, the course of the war

iii. Reactions to the Gettysburg Address in newspapers and accounts from residents of Gettysburg

D. Your character has just read or heard on of the following comments from a friend or family member. Choose one and respond to it in the form of a letter or dialogue.

i. “Someone read me Mr. Lincoln’s speech from the paper. When I heard those words I could only think that they were flowery promises that won’t really change anything or amount to much. You were there — what do you think?”

ii. “I saw the President’s speech in the paper the other day. He has promised the nation a ‘new birth of freedom,’ but I’m not sure if this applies to us or not. You were there — what do you think?”

iii. “I heard President Lincoln was in Gettysburg last week and talked about ‘unfinished work’ and the ‘great task remaining before us.’ What do you think he means by this?”

iv. “Father Abraham was here last week to dedicate the new cemetery for those he called ‘these honored dead’ and talked about consecrating the ground on which they died. But tell me — Do you believe that the promises he has made of a ‘new birth of freedom’ will really amount to changes worthy of this type of language?”

v. “I heard that Mr. Lincoln was in town last week to dedicate the new cemetery. I have heard nothing of the speech but that he used high flown language about a new world being made, and we’re all consecrating the ground like we’re preachers. You were there — what did you hear him say and what do you think it means?”

4. Long Remember: Post-War Life in Gettysburg

A. "Epilogue" informs students what happens to their character in the postwar period.

B. Students in "jigsaw" groups (one Brien, one Biggs, one Palm, one Robinson, one Watts) share their reactions to the Gettysburg Address.

C. Discussion questions:

   i. How did each character's life experiences affect how they heard the address?

   ii. Why did each character choose that particular phrase as most important?

   iii. Each group will create an "Inquiring Photographer" feature in which their "character" answers the question, "What does the Gettysburg Address mean to you?"

D. Each jigsaw group is charged with memorializing the African American experience at Gettysburg.

E. Using a "library of examples," each group will:

   i. Choose the style of monument

   ii. Choose the icons/figures

   iii. Write the inscription

   iv. OPTION – write a dedication speech which explains/justifies the appropriateness and symbolism of their choices.

VI. Gettysburg / Resources

Part 1- Gettysburg African American Biographies

Lloyd Watts:

Lloyd Watts was born free in Maryland in 1835, and moved with his family to the Gettysburg area in 1850. He attended school in Gettysburg, and worked for fifteen years as a laborer, perhaps in the town's brick kilns or carriage-making shops. In 1865 he enlisted in the United States Colored Troops. Among his duties was guarding Confederate prisoners of war, some of whom had been captured at Gettysburg. Watts was promoted to sergeant, in all likelihood because he was literate. After the war, Watts returned to Gettysburg, where he was a teacher in the town's "Colored School," an active member of St. Paul's African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and one of the "most respected colored citizens" of the town.

Basil Biggs:

Basil Biggs was born in Maryland in 1819. His mother died when he was four, leaving Biggs to be hired out to work for others. Although his mother left him the substantial sum of $400 with which to be educated, it was later stated that his only education was "with his hands." He married Mary Jackson in the 1840s, and they moved their family to Pennsylvania in the 1850s so that their five children could receive an education.

Biggs settled in Gettysburg in 1858 and reportedly used his home to conceal runaway slaves during the day. In 1863, Biggs was working as a veterinarian and a tenant farmer. With the threat of Confederate invasion of Pennsylvania, Biggs took his family east to Wrightsville. When they returned, "they found that the Confederate army had set up a field hospital on part of the farm, and that the entire property was covered with items dropped by men of both armies." Biggs later filed a claim for the loss of eight cows, seven steers, ten hogs, six beds, sixteen chairs, ninety-two acres of destroyed crops, eight tons of hay, ten crocks of apple butter, two sets of dishes, and jellies. Additionally, forty-five dead Confederates were buried on the farm.

In the weeks after the battle, Biggs was hired to bury more than 3,300 Union soldiers in the new National Cemetery. He used the money he earned to purchase a farm on the battlefield. He was an active member of the Sons of Goodwill, which worked to create a cemetery for the town's black Civil War veterans. Biggs was buried in this cemetery after his death in 1906.

The Last Will and Testament of John Fisher, July 19th, 1863

> *"I give and bequeath unto Basil Biggs, at present residing on the farm of John S. Crawford, my whole estate, Real, Personal, and Mixed, of what ever kind and wherever fond that I may be possessed at the time of my death, after the payment of all my just debts, funeral expenses, a decent sett (sic) of tombstones for myself, and the costs and charges of settling my estate (aforesaid).*

Margaret Palm

Margaret "Mag" Palm was twenty-four years old at the time of the battle. Born in Maryland, she moved to Gettysburg in the 1850s. An active member of the Underground Railroad, she was known locally as "Maggie Bluecoat" for the War of 1812 officer's coat that she wore when she conducted slaves to freedom. Mag believed that this work made her a target for Southern slave catchers, who on one incident attacked Mag, tied her hands, and attempted to bring her back to slavery. With the help of a passerby Mag fought off her attackers and escaped. At the time of the battle, Mag, her husband Alfred, and their son Joseph were living as tenants on the Abraham Brien farm.

Owen Robinson

Born a slave in Maryland, Owen Robinson lived in the borough of Gettysburg for twenty years before the war, operating a small restaurant on West High Street, where he sold oysters in the winter and ice cream in the summer. Charles McCurdy, a boy who lived in Gettysburg at the time of the battle, remembered that "Whenever there was a report that the Rebels were coming, (Owen) would decamp with his family for a place of safety, and did not return until the coast was clear." In the summer of 1863, as the Confederate army approached, Robinson asked McCurdy's father to care for his pigs and fled. Robinson returned after the battle and in the years after the war served as the sexton of Gettysburg's Presbyterian church.

Abraham Brien

Abraham Brien, whose farm stood at the center of the Union battle line at Gettysburg, was born in Maryland around 1804. He moved to Gettysburg in the 1830s so that his children could receive an education. At the time of the battle he owned twenty acres of land with two small houses, a barn, a wagon shed, and two tenant houses. Brien and his family fled to unknown parts just before the battle. He returned to find his property ravaged by the battle. He field a claim for five acres of wheat and two acres of barley, 200 fence boards, a tenant house which had been "torn and riddled and almost destroyed by artillery fire," his own home which was damaged by artillery fire, ransacked by soldiers, and stripped of its siding for use as burial markers for Union soldiers. The government reimbursed him fifteen dollars for his losses. After the battle Brien sold his farm and moved into town. He died in 1879.

VI. Gettysburg / Resources (continued)

Part 2- Supplementary Material, Fleeing and Hiding

Photographic:

McAllister's Mill and surrounding woods and trails.
http://www.gdg.org/Research/Underground%20Railroad/mill.htm

Text sources:

Salome Myers, a white teacher living in Gettysburg, wrote in her diary on June 15, 1863:

> "… the Darkies made such a racket up and down by our house that we could not sleep."

Twenty-five years after the battle, Tillie Pierce Alleman, who as a girl lived on the main street in Gettysburg, wrote: ("What a Girl Saw and Heard at Gettysburg" [1888]

> "We had often heard that the rebels were about to make a raid… On these occasions it was also amusing to behold the conduct of the colored people of the town. Gettysburg had a goodly number of them. The regarded the rebels as having an especial hatred toward them, and they believed that if they fell into their hands, annihilation was sure. These folks mostly lived in the southwestern part of town, and their flight was invariably down Breckinridge Street and Baltimore Street, and toward the woods on and around Culp's Hill. I can see them yet; men and women with bundles as large as old-fashioned feather ticks slung across their backs, almost bearing them to the ground. Children also, carrying their bundles, and striving in vain to keep up with their seniors. The greatest consternation was depicted on all their countenances as they hurried along; crowding, and running against each other in their confusion; children stumbling, falling and crying. Mothers, anxious for their offspring, would stop for a moment to hurry them up, saying: For' de lod's sake, you chillen, cum right long quick! If dem rebs dun katch you dey tear you all up."

Supplement Subject: Fleeing.

Fannie Buehler, who lived just off the square in the center of Gettysburg and whose husband was the town's postmaster, wrote: ("Recollections of the Rebel Invasion and One Woman's Experiences During the Battle of Gettysburg" [1889])

> "I know not whither [she fled] for I never saw [my servant] afterwards. I heard of her from someone who had seen her on the way to Philadelphia."

Charles McCurdy was a teen-aged boy living in Gettysburg at the time of the battle. He was a friend of Owen Robinson, a black man who owned a small restaurant in town. More than sixty years later, McCurdy remembered: ("Gettysburg: A Memoir" [1929]):

> "Whenever there was a report that the Rebels were coming, [Owen Robinson] would decamp with his family for a place of safety and not return until the coast was clear. This time there could be no doubt that the dreaded enemy was at hand, and the Robinson family joined the exodus of colored people. Before going he asked my father permission to put [his] pigs in our stable until his return. Father consented and promised to have them properly looked after."

Mary Elizabeth Montfort was twelve years old in 1863. She lived with her family just east of Gettysburg. Years later she remembered ("How a Twelve Year Old Girl Saw Gettysburg"):

> "Today we saw Aunt Beckie. She is the colored lady who helps mother with the wash. Jennie and I love Aunt Beckie. She and some other colored people were pulling wagons or pushing wheel barrows and carrying big bundles. 'Yo ol; Aunt Beckie is goin' up into de hills. No rebel is gonna catch me and carry me back to be a slave again.'"

The Harrisburg Telegraph reported on June 24, 1863:

> "Contrabands are arriving here constantly, and it really is a distressing sight to see women and children huddled in wagons, bringing all their worldly possessions with them."

Greencastle, Pennsylvania, is about twenty-five miles west of Gettysburg. In the days before the battle, Charles Hartman of Greencastle, wrote (Alexander and Conrad, <u>When War Passed This Way</u>):

> " … one of the exciting features of the day was the scouring of the fields about town and searching of houses for Negroes. These poor creatures, those of them who had not fled upon the approach of the foe, concealed in wheat fields around the town. Cavalrymen rode in search of them and many of them were caught after a desperate chase and being fired at. In some cases, the Negroes were rescued from the guards. Squire Kaufman and Tom Pauling did this, and if they had been caught, the rebels would have killed them."

Albertus McCreary was a boy living with his family on the main street of Gettysburg in 1863. Years later he remembered this amazing event ("Gettysburg: A Boy's Experience of the Battle"):

> "A number of colored people lived in the western part of town and when on the first day a great many of them were gathered together and marched out of town. As they passed our house our old washerwoman called out 'Goodbye, we are going back to slavery.' Most of them were crying and moaning. We never expected to see 'Old Liz' again, but the day after the battle ended she came walking in, exclaiming, 'Thank God, I's alive again!' We all crowded around her, anxious to know how she had got away. . . . The main fact was this: She was marched with the rest down the street and there was such a crowd that when they were opposite the Lutheran Church, in the confusion she slipped into the church without being seen, and climbed up into the belfry; she stayed there for the two days without anything to eat or drink."

Supplement Subject: Hiding

William Steptoe Christian was the colonel of the 55th Virginia Infantry of the Confederate army. On June 28, 1863, three days before the Battle of Gettysburg began, he wrote the following to his wife:

> "We took a lot of negroes yesterday. I was offered my choice, but as I could not get them back home I would not take them. In fact, my humanity revolted at taking the poor devils away from their homes. They were so scared that I turned them all loose."

G. Moxley Sorrel was an aide to General James Longstreet, Robert E. Lee's most trusted general in the Confederate army. On July 1, 1863, in a message ordering General George Pickett to bring his troops to Gettysburg, Sorrel wrote (from the Official Records of the War of the Rebellion):

> "The captured contraband had better be brought along with you for further disposition."

Years after the battle, a black resident who lived in Gettysburg in 1863 remembered (Clifton Johnson, "Battleground Adventure" [1915]):

> "… a nigger named Jack who worked on a farm near the town. At a time when a troop of raiders was known to be swooping in our direction he said "they'll kill all us niggers, or take us back to slavery." He was a bow-legged nigger who couldn't make much speed and he didn't have any confidence in his ability to outrun the rebels, so he crep' under a haystack and stayed without a morsel to eat for three or four days. He almost starved."

An African American farmhand recalled the following incident that took place in the fields west of Gettysburg on the first day of the battle: (Clifton Johnson, "Battleground Adventures," [1915])

> "A great many people had skedaddled, but … we were right there when the battle begun, and then we loaded up a wagon with provisions and grain, and got away with seven or eight of our horses down an old road into the woods. After we'd gone far enough to be well out of sight and hearing we unhitched the horses that drew the wagon . . .. There I stayed fearin' and tremblin', and looked after the horses. If the Rebels had happened to come through they'd have took 'em and me too, but they didn't get there. … The man's sons come back'ards and for'ards to bring me something to eat and make sure everything was all right."

Jacob Taughinbaugh was a boy living with his family just east of Gettysburg in 1863. Many years later he recounted this story of the Confederate invasion: (T.W. Herbert, ed., "In Occupied Pennsylvania," Georgia Review, [Summer 1950])

> "My mother had two Negro servants. We were sure if the Confederates found them they would be taken away. Our front porch was a few feet above the ground, and at one end there was an excavation below ground where you could get to the cellar from the outside. This entranceway was separated from the rest of the space under the porch by a wall made of stones without mortar. My mother took away stones enough to let the servants crawl through, then put the stones back just as they had been. She had to take out a good many stones, too, because one of the Negroes was a great big woman. Someone had to keep a sharp lookout all the time, and as soon as a soldier was seen coming Mother would take the servants down and stow them away. Sometimes there would be men hanging around the house all day. The best she could do then was to take down some food and slip it to them through the space of one stone when none of the men was near about."

A black resident of Gettysburg, who worked as a servant maid in a farmhouse north of Gettysburg, recalled the following encounter with Confederate soldiers (Clifton Johnson, Battleground Adventures, 1915):

> "(I) got down into the cellar, and I crawled way back in the darkest corner and piled everything in front of me. I was the only colored person there, and I didn't know what might happen to me." A Confederate officer lay wounded upstairs, and he "wanted the women to come up out of the cellar to take care of him and do some cooking, and he promised they should be well treated." Mr. Hankey**,** the servant maid's employer, asked the officer "Would you see a colored person protected if she was to help with the work here? He said he would, and he sent out a written somethin' or 'nother orderin' the men to keep out of the kitchen, and he had the door boarded up halfway so they could hand in things to be cooked and we could hand em' out afterward."

Mary Warren, a young girl who lived with her family near the square in the center of Gettysburg, reported many years later (Mary Warren Fasnacht, Memories of the Battle of Gettysburg, Year 1863, [1941]):

> “The Reverend Abraham Cole's wife and daughter lived not far from her home. “The daughter’s husband was in the Union army,” she wrote. “They were alone and did not know what to do. Mother told them to come to our house, that she would hide them in the loft over the kitchen, take the ladder away, and they would be safe. They stayed Friday night. Saturday no Confederates were about and they felt safe to go to their home again. The daughter said she couldn’t be paid to put in such another night, that she heard soldiers walking around all night – that they surely knew who was in that loft.” The two women fled to an unknown location, and Mary Warren commented, ‘We did not know where our colored friends had gone.’”

VI. Gettysburg / Resources (continued)

Part 5- Mag Palm Account

From account of David Schick, son of Mag Palm's employer:

"She lived up Long Lane, back of the old fair grounds. On this occasion she was attacked by a group of men who made the attempt to kidnap her and take her south where they expected to sell her and derive quite a profit. She was a powerful woman, and they would have, from the sale, derived quite a profit. These men succeeded in tying Mag's hands…She was fighting them as best as she could with her hands tied. She would attempt to slow them and succeeded in one instance in catching [an attackers] thumb in her mouth and bit the thumb off. John Karseen, who was crippled and ran a novelty shop on Baltimore Street, happened along at just the right time and by using his crutch was able to assist Mag in her fight with these kidnappers and drove them off and freed her from her bonds."

(photo courtesy of the Adams County Historical Society, Gettysburg, PA)

VI. Gettysburg / Resources (continued)

Part 6- The Gettysburg Address (for Learning Activity #3)

Delivered By President Abraham Lincoln on November 19, 1863

"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate- we cannot consecrate- we cannot hallow- this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that this government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth.

VI. Gettysburg / Resources (continued)

Part 7- Abraham Lincoln on Race Relations (for Learning Activity #3)

September 18, 1858-

> "I have never seen to my knowledge a man, woman or child who was in favor of producing a perfect equality, social and political, between negroes and white men."

About September 1859-

> "Negro equality! Fudge!! How long, in this government of a God great enough to make and maintain the Universe, shall there continue knaves to vend and fools to gulp, so low a piece of demagoguism as this."

March 6, 1860-

> "I want every man to have the chance – and I believe a black man entitled to it – in which he can better his condition – when he may look forward to hope to be a hired laborer this year and the next, work for himself afterward, and finally to hire men to work for him! That is the true system!"

December 1, 1862-

> "In giving freedom to the slave we assure freedom to the free — honorable alike in what we give, and what we preserve. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth."

August 26, 1863-

> "And then, there will be some black men who can remember that, with silent tongue, and clenched teeth, and steady eye, and well-poised bayonet, they have helped mankind on to this great consummation; while, I fear, there will be some white ones, unable to forget that, with malignant heart, and deceitful speech, they have strove to hinder it."

VI. Gettysburg / Resources (continued)

Part 8- Reactions to the Gettysburg Address (for Learning Activity #3)

1. From the Press:

(From Louis A. Warren, *Lincoln's Gettysburg Declaration*)

From the Chicago Tribune:

> "The dedicatory remarks by President Lincoln will live among the annals of the war."

From the Chicago Times:

> "The cheek of every American must tingle with shame as he reads the silly flat and dishwattery [sic] remarks of the man who has to be pointed out as the President of the United States. … Is Mr. Lincoln less refined than a savage? … It was a perversion of history so flagrant that the most extended charity cannot view it as otherwise than willful."

From the Springfield (MA) Republican:

> "His little speech is a perfect gem, deep in feeling, compact in thought and expression, and tasteful and elegant in every word and comma."

From the London Times:

> "The ceremony was rendered ludicrous by some of the sallies of that poor President Lincoln. Anything more dull and commonplace it would not be easy to produce."

From the Providence Daily Journal:

> "We know not where to look for a more admirable speech than the brief one which the President made…. It if often said that the hardest thing in the world is to make a five minute speech. But could the most elaborate and splendid oration be more beautiful, more touching, more inspiring than those few words of the President?"

From the Harrisburg Patriot and Union:

> "The President succeeded on this occasion because he acted without sense and without constraint in a panorama that was gotten up more for the benefit of his party than for the glory of the nation and honor of the dead … we pass over the silly remarks of the President: for the credit of the nation we are willing that the veil of oblivion shall be dropped over them and that they shall no more be repeated or thought of."

2. From Civilians:

The following are real examples of responses of citizens of Gettysburg to Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Please note that some of these responses were recorded immediately, while others were written down decades later.

(From Jared Peatman, "Profound Silence, Followed by Hearty Applause: Gettysburg Responds to Lincoln's Address," unpublished manuscript)

> "There was one disappointing feature about it – its marked brevity. The speaker had, as we thought, but barely commenced when he stopped. That clear, ringing voice ceased before we were ready for it. There was a pause between the closing of the address and the applause because the people expected more; but when it was apparent that the address was really concluded, the applause was most hearty. . ."
>
> "To my great surprise, after a few sentences, he completed his remarks."
>
> "His modest appearance and dignified manners, to say nothing of the noble speeches he made here, has endeared him to the hearts of the people and added thousands of friends to him on that day."
> "It was as fine as speech as I ever heard."
>
> "The recollections of men now living in Gettysburg are at variance. Some remember the liberal applause that the Sentinel's (a local newspaper) report indicates. Others with equal certainty deny that there was any outward expression of approval."

"I was thrilled each time and at Gettysburg possibly more by his presence than by anything he said."

"He stood in the gravity of his mien and manner as a seer with a message, as a prophet with a vision."

"The deep feeling of the speaker, combined with masterful self control and firmly set purpose, made a profound impression."

"On coming away I said to a classmate, 'Well, Mr. Lincoln's speech was simple, appropriate, and right to the point, but I don't think there was anything remarkable about it.' "

"I at once asked my fellow student, who was from the South, what he thought of it? 'Mighty good, for Old Abe,' he replied."[1]

[1] Barton, *Lincoln at Gettysburg*, 176.

VI. Gettysburg / Resources (continued)

Part 9- Contemporary Views of the Lincoln Administration (for Learning Activity #3)

From the National Intelligencer, September 23, 1862:

> "This new proclamation with regard to the contingent emancipation of slaves in the insurgent states not being self-enforcing any more than the proclamation of Gen. Hunter in regard to the immediate emancipation of slaves in the states of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, the only difference between the two papers resides in the signatures respectively attached to them. And as, in themselves considered, they are likely to prove equally void of practical effect, we are not without the suspicion that the President has taken this method to convince the only class of persons likely to be pleased with this proclamation of the utter fallacy of the hopes they have founded upon it. This opinion, we may add, derives confirmation from the fact that he suspends for some months the enforcement of so much of his declaration as denounces the emancipation of slaves in punishment for contumacy on the part of the "insurgent states."

From the Chicago Times, September 24, 1862:

> "If utter desperation had not before seized the people of the rebel states, as a consequence of the abolition and confiscation measures of the Congress at Washington, it will seize them now. The war hereafter, on their part, will be a contest for existence as communities and individuals.
>
> "We protest against this proclamation, in the name of the constitution, in behalf of good faith to the conservative millions of the northern and border states, and for the sake of the only means by which it has at any time been possible to restore the Union. We protest against it as a monstrous usurpation, a criminal wrong, and an act of national suicide."

From the Chicago Tribune, September 24, 1862:

> "We speak only to true men and patriots. To those who love slavery better than their country and their country's flag, and who echo the atrocious sentiment of the Chicago Times, that 'the Government, by act of the President, is itself in rebellion,' we have only to say that the sooner they shoulder muskets and step into the ranks of Jeff. Davis the sooner they will take their true places and act out the real sentiments of their hearts. But the great body of the people, Democrats as well as Republicans, will come up as one man to the support of the government in its faithful efforts to preserve the Union. Upon the heaven defying traitors who have drawn the sword against their country rests the responsibility of the act. They can even now prevent its taking effect by laying down their arms and returning to their allegiance. If they choose that the blow shall fall let it fall, and let all the people say Amen!"

From the Louisville Journal, October 1862:

> "The Government our fathers framed is one thing, and a thing above price; Abraham Lincoln, the temporary occupant of the Executive chair, is another thing and a thing of comparatively little worth. The one is an individual, the sands of whose official existence shall end, will be no more of less than any other individual. The other is a grand political structure, in which is contained the treasures and energies of civilization, and upon whose lofty and shining dome, seen from the shores of all climes, centre the eager hopes of mankind. What Abraham Lincoln, as President, does or fails to do may exalt or lower our estimate of himself, but not of the great and beneficent Government of which he is but the temporary servant. The temple is not the less sacred and precious because the priest lays an unlawful sacrifice upon the altar."

From Harriet Beecher Stowe:

> "Lincoln is a strong man, but his strength is of a peculiar kind: it is not aggressive so much as passive, and among passive things, it is like the strength not so much of a stone buttress as of a wire cable. It is strength swaying to every influence, yielding on this side and on that to popular needs, yet tenaciously and inflexibly bound to carry its great end and probably by no other kind of strength could our national ship have been drawn so safely thus far during the tossings and tempests which beset her way. …
>
> "Slow and careful in coming to resolutions, willing to talk with every person who has anything to show on any side of a disputed subject, long in weighing and pondering, attached to constitutional limits and time-honored landmarks, Lincoln certainly (is) the safest leader a nation could have at a time when habeas corpus must be suspended, and all the constitutional and minor rights or citizens thrown into the hands of their military leader. A reckless, bold, theorizing dashing man of genius might have wrecked our Constitution and ended us in a splendid military despotism."

From the Lawrence (Kansas) Republican, May 21, 1863:

De darkeys feel so lonesome libbin'
In de log house on de lawn,
Dey move dere tings in massa's parlor
For to keep it while he's gone;
Dere's wine an' cider in de cellar,
An' de darkey's dey'll hab some
I spec' dey'll all be confiscated
When de Linkum gunboats come.

From Ralph Waldo Emerson:

> "The extreme moderation with which the President advanced to his design,— his long-avowed expectant policy, as if he chose to be strictly the executive of the best public sentiment of the country, waiting only till it should be unmistakably pronounced,— so fair a mind that none ever listened so patiently to such extreme variations of opinions,— so reticent that his decision has taken all parties by surprise, whilst yet it is the just sequel of his prior acts,— the firm tone in which he announces it, without inflation or surplusage,— all these have bespoken such favor to the act, that, great as the popularity of the President has been, we are beginning to think that we have underestimated the capacity and virtue which the Divine Providence has made an instrument of benefit so vast. He has been permitted to do more for America than any other American man. He is well entitled to the most indulgent construction. Forget all that we thought shortcomings, every mistake, every delay. In the extreme embarrassments of his part, call these endurance, wisdom, magnanimity, illuminated, as they now are, by this dazzling success."

From Frederick Douglass:

"I went directly to the White House and saw for the first time the President of the United States. Was received cordially and saw at glance the justice of the popular estimate of his qualities expressed in the prefix Honest to the name Abraham Lincoln."

VI. Gettysburg / Resources Worksheet

Part 10- Contemporary Views toward Lincoln and the Gettysburg Address (for Learning Activity #3)

You have read what those who lived during the Civil War have written about Abraham Lincoln, his policies during the Civil War, and his Gettysburg Address. Before you move on to the next step of this exercise, take a minute to complete this worksheet to gain a better understanding of why these people felt the way they did.

What positive comments did people make about Lincoln?

What negative comments did people make about Lincoln?

What positive comments were made about Lincoln's policies, or about the Gettysburg Address?

What negative comments were made about Lincoln's policies, or about the Gettysburg Address?

People who held favorable opinions of Lincoln agreed with him most about _____.

People who held negative opinions of Lincoln disagreed with him most about _____.

Speculate:

What observations about those who held positive views of Lincoln can you infer from their comments?

What observations about those who held negative views of Lincoln can you infer from their comments?

What do you believe was/were the most important factor(s) in shaping people's opinions of Lincoln during the Civil War?

VI. Gettysburg / Resources (continued)

Part 11- Grave Diggers at Gettysburg

Union dead and burial detail.
(Library of Congress, Civil War photo collection)

Union soldiers took care of burials of battlefield dead though African American laborers were hired once the armies left to do this grisly task. Many of the soldiers who died from their wounds at field hospitals were buried by African American laborers.

VI. Gettysburg / Resources (continued)

Part 12- Basil Biggs

Adams County Historical Society

Basil Biggs and his wife

(Adams County Historical Society, Gettysburg)

VI. Gettysburg / Resources (continued)

Part 13- Owen Robinson

This image is not of Owen Robinson, but depicts *"Contrabands coming into camp in consequence of the proclamation,"* and depicts the idea of refugee status.

(Library of Congress, American Memory Collection)

VI. Gettysburg / Resources (continued)

Part 14- John Hopkins

(Special Collections, Gettysburg College)

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